



Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

Region 2 Headquarters
3201 Spurgin Road
Missoula, MT 59804
(406) 542-5500

September 7, 2016

Dear Interested Party:

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) is seeking public input on a proposal for a land exchange on its Spotted Dog Wildlife Management Area (WMA) located 5 miles northeast of Deer Lodge and one mile south of Avon, Montana. The 27,616-acre Spotted Dog WMA was acquired by FWP in 2010 to protect important wildlife habitat and to provide seasonal public access. The WMA borders private ranchland, State School Trust Lands, and US Forest Service lands. One of the private ranches, Cross Canyon Ranch (CCR), has inholdings on the WMA and is interested in entering into a land exchange with FWP that would consolidate each entity's holdings and facilitate management of both the ranch and the WMA. Of special importance to FWP is the opportunity to create passage between the eastern and western portions of the WMA, which currently is hindered by the checkerboard pattern of ownership boundaries. The proposed exchange would facilitate public access and movement within the WMA.

CCR is proposing to trade 4 parcels totaling 440 acres to FWP in exchange for 4 parcels totaling 514 acres. All parcels are located in T9N, R8W, in Powell County; see accompanying map. (On the map, FWP parcels proposed to go into private ownership are colored blue with blue acreage numbers; private parcels proposed to come into FWP ownership are colored salmon with red acreage numbers.) While the number of acres is not equal, the overall value of the lands considered for exchange is comparable.

The purpose of this letter is to notify interested parties of the opportunity to participate in the scoping phase of this process. Through this scoping phase, FWP seeks input from the public, adjacent landowners, and partner groups and agencies on reasonable alternatives, mitigation measures, issues, and potential impacts to be addressed in a subsequent environmental review.

The 30-day scoping period will begin on September 7, 2016. All comments need to be received by FWP by 5:00 p.m. on October 6, 2016. Please submit written or emailed comments to:

Sharon Rose
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
3201 Spurgin Rd
Missoula, MT 59804

shrose@mt.gov

If you have any questions or would like additional information regarding this project, please call Darlene Edge, Conservation Lands Specialist at (406) 444-4042 in Helena.

Thank you for your consideration of this project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Randy Arnold". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Randy" and last name "Arnold" clearly distinguishable.

Randy Arnold
Regional Supervisor

Encl: Map of Spotted Dog WMA--Land Exchange Project